

# A REMINDING LIGHT

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Remembering 15 lives Lost on Utah Roads



2016 Teen Memoriam





**DON'T DRIVE  
STUPID**

**zero Fatalities**



WHEN NAVIGATORS LOOK TO THE STARS IN THE SKY,  
THEY SEE SHINING LIGHTS THAT GUIDE THEM TO THEIR  
DESTINATION. THESE STARS REMAIN BEACONS IN THE  
DARKNESS, CONSTANTLY LEADING THE WAY FOR THOSE  
WHO SEEK DIRECTION.

TRAGICALLY, THE FOLLOWING TEENS LOST THEIR LIVES  
EN ROUTE TO THEIR DESTINATIONS FAR TOO EARLY.  
YET, LIKE THE STARS ABOVE, THEIR LIGHT CONTINUES  
TO SHINE—REMINDING US OF THE PRECIOUS NATURE  
OF OUR EXISTENCE AND THE IMPORTANCE OF DRIVING  
SAFELY ON OUR ROADS. MAY THEIR MEMORY GUIDE YOU  
ALONG YOUR WAY AND PROMPT YOU TO BE VIGILANT  
WHENEVER YOU GET BEHIND THE WHEEL.

WE THANK THE BRAVE FAMILIES OF THESE TEENS FOR  
SHARING THEIR STORIES IN THE HOPE THAT OTHER LIVES  
MIGHT BE SAVED.



# DESTANY TURRUBIARTEZ

AGE 16 • OGDEN, UTAH

Destany is my youngest of two daughters. She was born on May 5, 2000. She was a junior at Ben Lomond High School and on the dance team.

She LOVED to dance and there is nothing she wouldn't dance to! She also LOVED food! Her favorites were rice, pizza, potato logs, burritos, and McDonald's French fries. Destany had a heart of gold and had nothing but unconditional love for her family and friends. Especially her older sister who she called, "Sissy."

On October 29, 2016, my family was getting ready for our annual Halloween bash. Destany was happy, ready to dance, and be with the family.

As I was out getting things for the party, I happened to notice that a crash had just taken place on the corner of 12th and 12th in Ogden, Utah. I noticed a truck pulling a trailer in the middle of the road with debris everywhere. I pulled up to the scene, asked a friend to call 911, then got out of the car to make sure everyone was okay. I looked up and noticed the back of a car rolling toward me. It looked like my daughter Destany's car. I remember thinking, "Please God, please don't let that be my daughter's car." I looked closer and saw the license plate. My body went numb when I realized it was in fact Destany's car. Never in my life have I felt so helpless. I ran to the car wondering how I was going to get my daughter and my niece, who was in the passenger seat, out of the car.

Destany's car was T-boned on the passenger side as she tried to make a left hand turn. The truck that hit her was carrying a heavy trailer. I called my oldest daughter to come to the scene. She notified other family members including my niece's father. I stood in complete horror trying to get my daughter out of the car. The paramedics arrived and told me not to touch her and that they needed to get her out. I was enraged. She was flown to the hospital where they informed me that she would most likely not survive.

I was in the hospital room with my daughter until she took her last breath. At 12:07 a.m. on October 30th 2016, my daughter gave my hand a squeeze. I knew it was a personal message from her letting me know she was okay and ready to "go home." I knew in my heart that had she survived, she would have been miserable as she would not have been able to walk or care for herself because of the brain injury she suffered. Although I was broken, I had to let her go be in peace.

It doesn't matter how cautious of a driver you are, you have to be aware of everyone else. Love your children unconditionally every day. Do not take one second for granted.

I had a dream just this past Mother's Day. My daughter came to me and told me she "had jobs to do for Jesus." She was very matter of fact about it. Now I know God is taking care of my baby girl, and until I see her again, I will keep her alive with love.





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# ERICA LEONE MONTAGUE

AGE 16 • PAYSON, UTAH

Erica was born five weeks early, on April 18, 2000. She was pleasant to be around. Erica enjoyed reading, singing, playing the piano and accordion, and dancing. Erica even liked to talk in church. Erica always looked out for the underdog; making friends with the new kids in class or someone that needed cheering up. She was always positive. If she had a bad day, the next morning she would say, "Today's a new day." That's how she lived her life . . . as if every day was a new day.

In junior high school, Erica was involved in track, cross country, basketball, and was a member of the Junior National Honors Society where she enjoyed helping plan activities to help those in need. One of the activities that she loved was Penny Wars.

On May 7, 2016 Erica went with a friend to take another friend a gift. Erica was supposed to be home by 10:30 p.m. so when she was a few minutes late, her dad sent her a text message asking where she was. Erica texted back, "We're hurrying." That was the last time we would hear from her. At approximately 10:45 p.m. our beautiful, smart, fun-loving daughter was killed when the driver of the car she was riding in was speeding and lost control of the car. The car turned sideways into oncoming traffic. They were hit on the passenger side of the car and Erica was killed instantly. Her friend who was driving was flown to Utah Valley Regional Medical

Hospital in critical condition with a head injury, collapsed lung, broken ribs, and a cracked pelvis. The other driver and passengers were checked out at the hospital and released.

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PLEASE DON'T SPEED. IF YOU  
ARE GOING TO BE LATE, CALL  
YOUR PARENTS AND LET THEM  
KNOW. WE PROMISE YOU THAT  
THEY WOULD RATHER HAVE  
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HOME AT ALL.

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Erica had just turned 16 a few weeks before the crash. She was so excited to start driving and had asked her grandpa if she could buy his Ford Ranger truck, "Little Blue." Her grandpa told her she had to learn how to drive it first (it's a stick shift) and then they would talk. Erica was a sophomore at Salem Hills High School and it seemed that she had everything going for her. She was in the school choir and had just made it into

Serendipity. She was on the softball team (#00) and was planning to play summer ball with the team. Erica was looking forward to dating and had asked a friend to MORP (a girl's choice dance). She had registered for classes for her junior year. She was also the Laurel President in our ward.

To say our lives have been forever changed since Erica was taken from us would be an understatement. We live daily with things that we will never get to do with Erica – see her graduate from high school, college, get married, have children, her dreams, and our dreams for her, not to mention those that miss her – us, her younger sister, her grandparents, family, and friends.

We cannot express how grateful we are for the outpouring of support from our family, friends, co-workers, community, and even strangers since the crash. To help keep Erica's memory alive we created a scholarship in her name called the "Have Courage, Be Humble and Kind Scholarship in Memory of Erica Leone Montague." We hope to continue this scholarship for years to come so our daughter will never be forgotten.

Please don't speed. If you are going to be late, call your parents and let them know. We promise you that they would rather have you home safe and sound (and late), than not come home at all.



# JOSHUA RICHARD MIKEL NIELSEN

AGE 15 • LAYTON, UTAH

Josh was born on April 30, 2001 in Las Vegas, NV. He was our dream child, sent from heaven after 10 years of impatient waiting. His biological mother placed him in my arms three days after he was born, and we saw the brilliant light which sprang from his soul immediately. His adoption was finalized in October of 2001. From the time he could understand, I told him he grew in my heart for 10 years.

We called him our "sunshine boy" because of the energetic, warm, intense brightness that emanated from his soul. He loved a good joke and making people smile and laugh. To Josh, everyone mattered, from the classmate sitting alone at lunch to his friends who trusted him with their secret anxieties and concerns.

Josh adored music and began performing in choirs in third grade. While attending North Layton Junior High, he participated in concert and advanced choir. He performed in the school production of Pirates of Penzance and the summer production of Music Man at the Clearfield Community Theatre. As a sophomore at Northridge High School, Josh performed in the men's choir and the school production of Fiddler on the Roof. Right before he died, he told me he had found his place in the world – music and theatre.

Josh was an active member of the LDS Church, participating in Scouting and priesthood responsibilities. He was scheduled to become an Eagle Scout but was killed before completing his last requirement.

On Black Friday (the day after Thanksgiving), I was shopping near our home. As I drove out of the store parking lot, three emergency vehicles flew by with sirens blaring. I saw the flashing lights stop not far up the street and wondered what had happened. I was home for about 10 minutes when the call came. Josh was in critical condition at Davis Hospital.

His best friend, who had just gotten his learner permit a few months earlier, was driving and turned in front of an oncoming vehicle. They were T-boned on the passenger side. Josh took the full force of the blow. No one else was hurt.

As the doctors tried to stabilize him, I sat by his side, held his hand, and told him how much I loved him. We hugged him, kissed his forehead, and held his hand as they turned off the machines. I am so grateful we were there when the last blip crossed the heart monitoring screen. I will never be able to touch his hand, give him a hug, or kiss him goodnight again. We were ushered from the room and I had to leave my baby's broken body lying on the gurney.

We were honored to be his parents and privileged to have had his extraordinary soul with us. We will forever miss the beautiful light that shined so bright whenever he entered the room. We cherish the time we had with our sunshine boy and miss him more each passing second. He grew in my heart for 10 years and that portion of my heart is now overflowing with tears.



There is a reason you practice driving with an adult in the vehicle after receiving your learner permit. Experience is vital. Respect the learner permit requirements and know that the rules are in place to provide you with the education, knowledge, and

experience to protect yourself, your friends, and family from harm. Then, after you have earned your official driver license, you can use this experience to consider the ever-changing road conditions.



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# SANDON RYLEE MARSHALL

AGE 19 • VERNAL, UTAH

Sandon was born on January 20, 1997, bringing joy and brightness to a winter day. He was welcomed into our family by his parents and two older brothers. He was a bouncy, happy boy with a contagious, quick smile and a kind and loving heart. Sandon looked up to his brothers and wanted to do what they were doing. You couldn't tell Sandon that he was "too little" for something - it just strengthened his determination. When he was five, his little sister was born. They quickly became the best of friends. He loved, teased, tormented, and protected her. He graduated from Uintah High School having played on the tennis team and adding his beautiful bass voice to the "Hi-Lites," the school's premier choir. Sandon spent his summers as a youth leader at BSA camps, became an Eagle Scout, and was awarded many palms thereafter. He loved to shoot and was a better aim than his father.

Sandon was non-judgmental and gave everyone a chance. He was very concerned with others and spent much of his life quietly trying to brighten other's days. He sent texts to people who were having a hard day or made a quick stop to say hello or check on those he was thinking about. He often knew when someone was struggling or needed a boost. We were touched by the magnitude and far-reaching influence of Sandon's love. We didn't know how many people Sandon had impacted until after his death.

After high school graduation, Sandon stayed at home and worked full-time while taking classes at the USU Uintah Basin Campus. He was planning to move to Logan on May 30th to continue his education. But Sandon did not get to realize that dream. On the afternoon of May 27, 2016, he and a sweet friend, Cierra, took a short drive to a popular

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mountain biking area called McCoy Flats. They were hit from behind by an inattentive driver while waiting to make a left hand turn and pushed into oncoming traffic. Sandon was killed instantly and Cierra struggled for her life for several weeks. Our lives were forever changed in that one instant!

Sometimes you do everything right behind the wheel but your life is also in the hands of other drivers on the road. Distracted or inattentive driving can change lives in an instant. Sandon had many dreams that will go unfulfilled; many life experiences and goals that he won't be able to share with his family. This world now has a giant hole without the comfort that Sandon gave to others and the laughter and joy that he added to their lives.

No parent should have to answer the door and see two highway patrolmen standing there with sorrow in their eyes. No child should have to struggle for her life, miss the funeral of her friend, and be told, weeks later after waking up from a coma, that her friend is dead. Sandon would want us to remember what is truly important in life . . . our families, giving service, and influencing those around us for the better. Always tell those you love that you love them and live so that they

know it. We thought we would see Sandon again within the hour but we didn't get to say goodbye. It gives us peace to know that he knew we loved him, and that he loved us.

Let us not forget that when we sit behind the wheel, we also affect other people's lives for good or bad.





# SYDNEY NAYLOR

AGE 16 • TOOELE, UTAH

May 31, 2016, was the last day of school and the Tooele High School Softball Banquet and Award Ceremony. Sydney loved softball and the softball community. Shortly after we got home, she asked if she could go out with friends. It was the beginning of summer and they wanted to check out Mercur, a nearby cemetery and ghost town that was supposedly haunted. Approximately an hour later, my husband and I listened to sirens as we lay in bed watching T.V. Soon after the sirens quieted, there was a knock at our door.

It was our neighbor. He had received a call from another neighbor who had witnessed the crash and wanted to inform us so that we could drive to the scene.

Sydney had been in a rollover car crash and was ejected from the car. She was flown to Primary Children's Hospital where we were told she suffered severe head and neck trauma and that her injuries were inoperable and not survivable. We were told that she was not wearing a seat belt. We were shocked





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## WE LOST PART OF OUR FUTURE WHEN WE LOST SYDNEY.

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because she always wore her seat belt. We later found out that the vehicle's seat belts weren't working properly.

The next day, June 1st, 2016, our family decided to take our 16-year-old daughter off of life support.

Sydney was the youngest of four children and losing her was devastating. We lost part of our future when we lost Sydney. We won't see her graduate, get married, or have children of her own. We have very few memories that don't include her. We miss her every minute of every day.

Sydney was a goofy, kind-hearted, determined, softball-loving diva. She had a beautiful smile that lit up any room. She was known for being a kind and loyal friend who was friendly and accepting. Sydney was strong and confident and reached out to her friends with love and support. Her laugh was contagious and she had a goofy sense of humor.

Our family received an outpouring of love and support from both our Tooele community

and her softball family. We could either get better or bitter and we decided to get better.

We started the "Live Like Syd Foundation" to raise money to give back to our community and give scholarships to high school seniors in the Tooele County School District. We want to encourage students to attend college and build their careers through higher education. Sydney loved softball and her softball family. She loved being a part of a team who worked together to become better while having fun. We also would like to encourage participation in extracurricular activities through sponsorships in her honor. We want to bring joy, light, and happiness to all who receive these scholarships, just like Sydney did to everyone she came in contact with.

The pineapple is part of our foundation logo as it symbolizes "Stand Tall, Wear a Crown, and Be Sweet." Our foundation slogan is "Be Kinder, Laugh Louder, Try Harder, and Love Deeper." We want to encourage people to live by these values in honor of Sydney, who was very loved and taken unexpectedly too young.

Live Like Syd.



# SIMON G. OLSEN

AGE 18 • SARATOGA SPRINGS, UTAH

Simon was born on May 15, 1998, the youngest of four children. His parents and siblings cried tears of joy when he was born and now heaven rejoices that they received such a beautiful soul.

Simon had a heart of gold and was always thinking of others. He liked everyone he met and everyone liked him. Simon spoke up for the underprivileged and those that could not defend themselves. He was a loyal and trusted friend. Simon loved hugs and felt no shame over public affection. He adored music and movies — he was constantly singing or rapping and loved family movie night. He had a gift for making people laugh and both his smile and personality were contagious. Simon loved the outdoors, from fishing, camping, and hiking to river rafting on

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the Snake River. There wasn't anything he wouldn't try. He was in constant motion, his sense of adventure urging him to discover new sensations and experiences. He lived a full life and enjoyed every moment. This was Simon's passion. A gifted athlete, he enjoyed playing basketball.

Simon and his girlfriend, Hailie Godfrey, were killed in a head-on crash late on the night of August 17, 2016. They were hit by a 20-year-old driver, Tanner Evans, who had fallen asleep at the wheel. What is crazy about the crash is that we know Tanner's family very well. We hold no hard feelings and we love that family! We know the Evans family is devastated and feeling the same pain and sadness.

I am so proud of my children. When my son, Chandler, found out who the driver was, he wanted to drive over and tell the family that we forgive them and have no hard feelings. My daughter, Lexi, posted on her Facebook wall to pray for him and his family. And my son, Gehrig, is not angry either. This is what Simon would have





wanted. He loved everyone and would want everyone to be laughing and have no anger.

I'm sure Simon would say, "Guys, relax. I will see you all very soon. I'm skydiving in Heaven and practicing my basketball skills."

I'm humbled by the power of forgiveness, for this is the only way to heal and move forward. We donated many of the organs in Simon's body, which will help 30 people. Simon would have liked knowing he helped others in need.

Please pray for all of us and especially the Evans family. This is not easy for any of us, but through God and faith we will get through this most trying time in our lives.

The outreach and love extended to our family has been overwhelming, we have had so many friends and family visit, call from all over the world and hundreds of texts and Facebook posts. We feel the power of your thoughts and prayers. It is by this power that we are getting through this most challenging time.

Some people say that there is no God, others say we will not have an afterlife. But I CHOOSE to BELIEVE, I CHOOSE to be HAPPY, I CHOOSE to live my life through my son. And I CHOOSE one day to embrace my son and cry tears of joy.



# HAILIE LEE-ANN GODFREY

AGE 18 • EAGLE MOUNTAIN, UTAH

Hailie, the second oldest of four girls, was born five weeks early on April 13, 1998 in Layton, Utah. Many words describe Hailie – vibrant, happy, outgoing, friendly, spunky, sassy, strong, beautiful, spontaneous, loving, social, fun, adventurous, and determined.

Hailie loved spending time with her family and friends, dancing, animals, baking, camping, and keeping active. She was a friend to everyone. We share and have heard of warm memories from others about her sweet spirit, warm heart, bright eyes, and infectious smile.

Hailie was full of life and full of tenacious passion. In high school, she made the drill team her freshman year but wouldn't make the team again until her junior year. During the time between these tryouts, she put one of her favorite quotes to work, "Every champion was once a contender that refused to give up." While on the drill team she had the opportunity to visit New York where she met and took a class from The Rockettes at Radio City Music Hall, watched the Broadway show "Wicked," and found a way to shop at Carlo's Bakery in Hoboken, New Jersey, the location of Cake Boss which was one of her favorite T.V. shows. She also traveled with the team to dance at nationals in Orlando, Florida. During her senior year, Hailie was a member of the Future Farmers of America (FFA) and showed her pig at a fair. She graduated from Westlake High School and from Mountainland Applied Technical College in dental assisting.

Hailie and Simon were killed instantly by a thoughtless, self-centered driver in a lifted

truck who fell asleep at the wheel. The driver drifted across six lanes of traffic, causing a horrific head-on crash. The crash happened less than one mile from our home. When the deputies came to the door to give us the devastating news, we could see the reflection from all of the lights at the crash scene bouncing off of the street signs and hills. With the crash happening so close to home, in our day-to-day routines we frequently pass the crash site and shop at her place of work. Many times, this results in replaying in our minds the week before and after her untimely death. The day of the crash we had her packed up and were leaving to take her to Dixie State University. It was there her educational journey was to begin on the path to fulfilling her goal of becoming a pediatric dentist.

Our family has endured waves of existential crisis, sorrow, anguish, and unimaginable grief that has shattered us to our core. Our lives have forever changed yet we must persevere and carry on our lives without Hailie as a family unit.

Our family would like other drivers to know that accidents might happen but crashes are preventable. Getting behind the wheel to drive is a serious responsibility that should not be taken lightly. Poor decisions can be very unforgiving. Do not drive when you are, or think you might be tired. Pay attention, stay focused, and drive alert . . . a life depends on it.



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# CALEB ALLEN

AGE 17 • WEST VALLEY CITY, UTAH

Caleb was born on May 28, 1997. He was always on the go and couldn't sit still for very long. He had to be doing something all the time. Caleb had a really big heart and tried to make sure everyone was happy. He had a strong desire to please. Caleb was the first one to jump in if anyone needed help. He could make you laugh, even when you were mad at him or he was in trouble. He was outgoing and liked living on the edge. Caleb had a great big dog, Ursa, that he loved.

Caleb loved cars. He had a Mustang and was helping his older brother to fix up a car he had bought. He didn't really like school because he had to sit still but if he could use his hands to fix something, he was right there. Caleb was very mechanically inclined and often worked on cars. He was the one in the family to figure out how to fix something when it was broken.

Caleb always talked about getting a motorcycle. I told him he couldn't because I wanted him to live longer than me. But Caleb felt he was invincible. He would tell me that nothing bad could happen to him. He was a bit of a risk taker too. When he was old enough

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to get a motorcycle on his own, he did. The crash happened a week before Caleb's 18th birthday. It was late and he was going too fast as he entered a roundabout.



He hit the curb, flew off his motorcycle, and slammed into a wall. Caleb wasn't wearing a helmet.

At about 2 o'clock that morning, I heard our dog barking. I got up and heard someone knocking on the door. It was the police. My first thought was, "Why are the police here at 2 o'clock in the morning?" That's when they told me Caleb had been killed in a motorcycle crash.

I think about Caleb a lot. When I go outside to work in the yard, I remember him. He was the one who helped me take care of the yard more so than any of my other children. His siblings miss him a lot. Caleb's death has been the hardest on his younger brother, who is only a year-and-a-half younger than him. They were very close.

When I'm driving down the road and I see a motorcyclist who isn't wearing a helmet, it makes my stomach drop. It's so hard to see that. You don't realize how short life can be and how critically important your decisions are. One second, and your life is gone.





# BAILEE MARIE DIBERNARDO

AGE 17 • LAYTON, UTAH

Bailee was a bright, beautiful girl with dreams and hopes for her future. She was born on Dec. 1, 1998 in Layton, Utah, and from that moment she was a blessing to her family. She was raised by her mother, Kristina. Bailee wasn't just her daughter, but her best friend. Kristina remembers, with a deep welling of emotion, telling her daughter, "You are my heart."

For those who were blessed to know Bailee, she brought laughter, love, and happiness into their lives. Bailee was a vivacious, feisty princess with blonde, curly hair, and big blue eyes. Her spunky personality reflected her outlook on life. She was determined, yet kind. Her infectious smile could make a difference in your day. Bailee loved life.

As a little girl, Bailee loved to play dress up and spend time with her cousins. When she was 11, Kristina married. Bailee was the maid of honor. Their new family was perfect. A few years later, Bailee finally became a big sister and she adored her new little sister. An adventurous family, they enjoyed camping, snowmobiling, skiing, hunting, and whitewater rafting. She loved learning new makeup tricks on YouTube and loved having her hair and nails done. She was a girly girl, but with a twist of tomboy. She could get dirty in a mud run, score a home run in baseball, and be dazzling in a dress at her high school prom.

Bailee was a true friend. She loved people, and especially her peers. With an inner strength, she took on a heavy responsibility for a young lady. A peer tutor and a listening ear for those in trouble. Bailee had a calling as a voice for suicide prevention. She believed in trying to help teens in need.

On the morning of January 11, 2016, after Bailee had been dropped off at school, she and a friend decided to get Frappuccino's. At the crosswalk, the cars on one side stopped for them. They thought they had time to cross. They must have thought the truck coming from the other direction would stop. He should have seen them but rather than keeping his eyes

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HE SHOULD HAVE SEEN THEM  
BUT RATHER THAN KEEPING HIS  
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on the road, he leaned over to retrieve a drink he had dropped. Bailee and her friend were hit. Her friend was thrown to the side of the road. Bailee lay in the middle of the road. Another driver, who also wasn't paying attention to the road, ran over Bailee. She was wedged beneath the car and dragged more than 50 yards down the road.

Bailee lost her life that morning and her family lost their feisty princess. Her little sister lost the chance to know this amazing young lady. And her mother lost her best friend, her daughter, her heart. She now struggles to make sense of what their life has become. She suffers from PTSD. But she knows that she will always be Bailee's mom and she lives to make Bailee proud by being a voice to bring awareness to the dangers of distracted driving.

The events that happened that morning should never be forgotten. Laws on distracted driving need to be changed. As a community, we need to demand those changes.

[www.changeforbailee.com](http://www.changeforbailee.com)





# TUCKER JOSEPH KUNZ

AGE 18 • MIDDLETON, IDAHO

Tucker was the last of five children to be born to our family. He made a grand entrance from the get-go, having been born at home without any help from our midwife! We have a close bond with our other children, but there was just something about the way he joined our family that was really special.

Tucker was very sensitive and caring to other people and their needs. He was humble, made good choices, and made us proud. He was such a good example of a true disciple of Christ.

He was involved in band and choir and had an excellent singing voice. We loved to spend time hunting, fishing, camping, and hiking. He played sports growing up, enjoyed tinkering around with engine repairs, and loved woodworking. He had a good engineering mindset and could have developed that talent into something profound. Tucker enjoyed making exotic wood pins and even used this talent to get an A+ on a school assignment. He loved to read and his favorite books were the Percy Jackson and Harry Potter books. Tucker hated having his picture taken. We teased him that he was adopted because we didn't have very many pictures to prove he was ours.

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I AM SO GRATEFUL I COULD  
HUG HIM THAT MORNING AND  
TELL HIM I LOVED HIM AND  
HOW PROUD I WAS OF HIM FOR  
THE YOUNG MAN THAT HE WAS.

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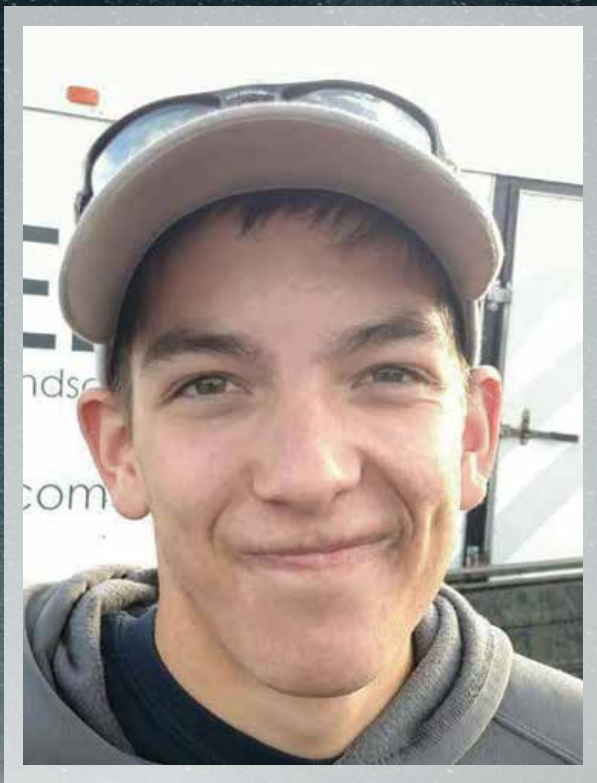
Tucker had graduated high school and was trying to figure out a game plan for his life. He started working for a professional lawn care company and took great pride in this work. Whenever we drove around, Tucker would say, "That's our contract. See how well it's manicured? We are the only company that does perfect tree rings like that." It correlated perfectly with his personal code of ethics.

The morning of the crash, Tucker decided to go with his aunt and cousin to Utah. We would join them a couple of days later. I am so



grateful I could hug him that morning and tell him I loved him and how proud I was of him for the young man that he was.

As they were entering Snowville, Utah, his cousin lost control of the vehicle and hit the barrier in the center median, sending the



car air born. The car rolled and then burst into flames just minutes after witnesses pulled everyone from the vehicle. We think Tucker was killed instantly. Everyone was wearing their seat belts, the weather was good, no one was tired or distracted, and there wasn't any alcohol or drugs involved.

My brother-in-law, who is a detective for the Nampa City Police Department, was the one who notified us that Tucker had been killed. He didn't want a stranger to tell us. When he walked in the house, we knew Tucker was gone. No parent should ever have to bury their child.

We miss Tucker terribly. His cousins, aunts, and uncles all miss him. He had a sweet girlfriend whom we still keep in contact with. Tucker often told us he felt like he didn't have very many friends or that he wasn't making much of a difference in the world, but after seeing all of the people who came to his funeral, we can't help but think that he did make a huge impact on other people's lives.

Tucker wasn't able to serve an LDS mission due to health reasons and perhaps he just wasn't satisfied with that answer . . . and now he gets to serve that mission, just differently than we had all hoped.



# BRAXTON PHETSYSOUK

AGE 14 • CORRINE, UTAH

Braxton Phetsysouk was just 14 years old when he was tragically taken from his family and the ones who loved him most. Braxton was hanging out with friends on a Saturday night, one last time before high school soccer tryouts the following Monday. Braxton and his three friends decided they wanted to get drinks at the little store across the highway. It was starting to get dark on their way back and the street they had to cross was poorly lit. Braxton was tragically hit by a car that was trying to pass one of the cars that was waiting for Braxton and his friends to cross. He was transferred to Primary Children's Hospital by LifeFlight where he passed away surrounded by his family and friends.

Braxton's absence is deeply felt by all who knew him. Braxton was an amazing





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## IT ONLY TAKES A MOMENT OF DISTRACTION OR NOT THINKING CLEARLY TO CHANGE A LIFE FOREVER.

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kid who radiated sunshine into every room he walked into. His goal in life was to help others and make everyone happy. He knew how to make his family and friends feel special. His laughter was contagious and his smile is forever imprinted into our minds and our hearts.

Braxton had a love for soccer and was a coach's dream player. He worked hard on the field as team captain and had amazing sportsmanship.

Braxton's impact on so many people at such a young age is something most of us only dream of. It only takes a moment of distraction or not thinking clearly to change a life forever. In Braxton's case, his friends are left with the traumatic memory of how they lost their dear friend. The driver is left with the everlasting feeling of guilt as he replays that night over and over in his head. As Braxton's mom, my heart is broken and I can never fill the hole that my sweet Braxton has left. It's been a year and a half without my son and I still have forever to go.



# DREX JADE TAYLOR

AGE 18 • DIAMOND VALLEY, UTAH

"It was a long, great day hanging out with my older brother, cousins, and friends at the lake. It was the end of the school year; I was finally going to be a senior at Dixie High School in St. George, Utah. Summer basketball tournaments were in full swing and football camp was in the near future. I was happy and life was looking good. Then I chose to drive a friend home after a full day and night of fun, very tired. Oh yeah, we forgot to wear our seatbelts too."

Drex was born on April 1, 1998. Yes, on April Fools' Day, which is so fitting. Drex loved to tease and prank his loved ones. He had a big heart and a soft spot for sticking up for anyone that needed it. Drex paid close attention to others' feelings. He had a great sense of humor and could dish it out as well as take it. After he died, we received many letters, cards, and stories of how Drex was always there for his friends.

Drex participated in Junior Rodeo and 4-H, showing sheep at the Dixie Livestock Show. But Drex's true passion and love were basketball and football. He played with the "Think Swish" basketball Club and Dixie High School

basketball and football teams. Drex shared his love and knowledge of these two sports with his younger brothers. He loved watching and supporting them, cheering them on, or teasing them about a fumble.





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PLEASE ALWAYS, ALWAYS WEAR  
YOUR SEAT BELT. HAD DREX AND  
TAYLOR BEEN WEARING THEIR  
SEAT BELTS THAT NIGHT, THEY  
WOULD HAVE WALKED AWAY  
FROM THE CRASH.

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I was in my backyard during the early morning hours on Sunday May 22, 2016, taking care of my dying horse. I was so distracted with my horse, that I completely lost track of time until I heard sirens headed up State Route 18 near our home town. My first thought was, "Where was Drex? Did he come home?" I ran around to the front yard. Nope, Drex's car wasn't there. Oh, how my heart hurt. I could feel something wasn't right. I could hear the sound of a helicopter flying overhead. It was close enough that I could tell it was LifeFlight.

Just then I received a call from my oldest daughter who said, "Mom, we just got a call from our friend, Chance. He came across Drex's

crashed car by Dammeron Valley. He doesn't know if Drex is OK." I froze, that sinking feeling in my gut was stronger than ever. I called Dixie Regional Medical Center. They confirmed that Drex had been in a crash and that an officer was en route to speak with me. I knew my sweet son had left this earth. Moms just know.

Drex was driving his friend, Taylor, home after a long, fun day. It was early in the morning and we think Drex fell asleep while driving. He drifted off the roadway and the vehicle overturned. Neither Drex nor Taylor were wearing their seat belts. They were both ejected from the car. Drex was killed and Taylor now faces a lifetime of recovery from her injuries.

We are overwhelmed with grief and loss. Drex's six siblings miss him terribly. He was the middle kid, the glue, and instigator in all of our family settings. His humor and quick wit are forever lost. We are always thinking about what Drex would be doing if he were still with us.

Please always, always wear your seat belt. Had Drex and Taylor been wearing their seat belts that night, they would have walked away from the crash. And if you are tired, it's OK to pull over and rest or wait for someone to come get you and bring you home safely.



# HUNTER CHASE JOHNSON

AGE 17 • BOUNTIFUL, UTAH

Hunter was born on March 25, 1999 and he could not have come to a more fitting home of such abundant love for his arrival. As he grew and developed into his own little person, the love he had for life and others was quickly apparent. Hunter was always smiling and began playing jokes on his mom and others from a very early age. He had such a tender heart and cared about even God's smallest creatures. He was

very sensitive to others' feelings. There were many instances when I was having a rough day, and by no mention by me, Hunter would reach up, put his arms around my neck and give me a hug. He found the silver lining in the darkest times and brought pure joy to those around him in every situation, most often through his wit and spectacular humor.

Over the years, Hunter participated in different sports and activities which is how he discovered his love of wrestling and football. He planned to continue playing both in his upcoming senior year at Bountiful High School. Hunter was known as the class clown and even his teachers couldn't help but smile at his joking personality. Hunter's legacy as a jokester will live on as his constant desire to scare his family became a regular occurrence at family gatherings.

Hunter was known and loved by so many throughout his life. He was extremely smart and very talented and worked well





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WE WILL LOVE YOU FOREVER AND  
ALWAYS AND LOOK FORWARD TO  
BEING TOGETHER AGAIN WHEN OUR  
MISSIONS HERE ON EARTH  
ARE COMPLETED.

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with his hands taking up hobbies such as painting, drawing, origami, jewelry making, ceramics, as well as something he kept from others, a great singing voice.

As Hunter was looking to his future, he contemplated serving an LDS mission, and had a desire to serve in the Air Force and continue his education to become a brain surgeon. Besides rooting for the Seattle Seahawks as his #1 professional football team, Hunter was true blue at heart for his love of BYU football. Hunter enjoyed video games, movies, pizza, and Sour Patch Kids.

On July 3, 2016, Hunter and I were driving near Strawberry Reservoir. We were hit head-on as I attempted to pass a vehicle, sending our car down an embankment. I tried to avoid the crash by swerving left to miss the oncoming car, but we collided in the front passenger side area where Hunter was sitting.

Hunter expressed a strong desire to know what his purpose here on earth was. Well, "Hunter Boy"... your purpose was to bring all the love, happiness, and joy you did to your family and friends. There is not a single person who has come to know you that went untouched by your love, laughter, smiles, kindness, service, and all-around good heart which you shared with them each and every day. You are AWESOME and will forever be my "Handsome Son." I am so proud of the young man you have become. Thank you for returning to your Heavenly home just the way you are. We will love you forever and always, and look forward to being together again when our missions here on Earth are completed.



# LEXIE SAGE FENTON

AGE 16 • DRAPER, UTAH

Lexie was born on July 23, 2000, one minute after her identical twin sister, Lauren. They were best friends and inseparable. Nobody could tell them apart. We painted their toes different colors, put bracelets on different wrists, and eventually parted their hair different, just so people could tell them apart.

Lexie was our happy heart and she loved the color pink. She always had a smile and found a way to connect with those who needed a friend. She had a funny sense of humor and her laugh could light up the room. Lexie and Lauren were always together. Some of their favorite things to do were to go shopping at Cactus and Tropical, eat dinner at Zupas, listen to music, or grab a drink at Swig. Lexie loved flowers and succulents and wanted to be a florist when she grew up.

Lexie was a junior at Corner Canyon High School. School never came easy for Lexie, but she worked hard and it paid off. She was accepted into the National Honor Society and a member of the mountain biking team. This last summer Lexie had learned to surf and loved it. She was a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and had a strong testimony.

On the night of November 19, 2016, Lexie, Lauren, and three of their friends decided to go to a movie and then to a friend's birthday party. Lexie ran in the house at 11:23 p.m. as I was putting up the Christmas tree. I had just attempted to Snapchat my kids a picture of me dancing around the tree. She opened the coat closet to grab something and yelled, "Nice Snapchat, Mom. You need to work on them." She giggled and ran out the door. It was the last time we would see that darling smile.

A few minutes later, I received a phone call from one of her mountain biking coaches. She told me to grab my husband and drive down the street. We could hear sirens and see lights. In the middle of

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ONE CHOICE TO DRIVE TOO FAST  
TOOK OUR SWEET LEXIE FROM US.

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it all was a ball of fire. As we got closer, I could tell the ball of fire was a car. I kept thinking, "My girls, my girls." I ran out of the car and an officer grabbed me and told me I couldn't be there. I told him my twins were in the car that was on fire. He walked me back to the yellow tape. As we were walking back, I saw a black blanket lying on the ground . . . a single hand sticking out the side.



I begged him to tell me if it was one of my daughters. He kindly told me I had to go behind the tape. We stood there for what seemed like an eternity. Finally, an officer let us know that our daughter, Lauren, had been injured and was in an ambulance heading to the hospital. He then proceeded to tell us that our sweet Lexie had been killed. Her friends tried to catch some air on a road that was known for jumping. Every day we are faced with choices. Some are trivial and some more far reaching. Some will make no difference and others will make all the difference in the world. One choice to drive way too fast stole our sweet Lexie and her friend, Ethan, from us. May we all remember to make good choices especially when driving.

Lexie, we only got you for a short time but your sweet life will be remembered and cherished as long as we live. We can't wait to be reunited with you and have our twins back together. Love you Lex!!!





# HUNTER DOUGLAS KELLY

AGE 18 • LAYTON, UTAH

From the time Hunter drew his first breath, he was on the go. Hunter's favorite sound was laughter. From his dry sense of humor, his daily hugs, and his appetite for trying to make people smile made for a one-of-a-kind sibling and a beautiful son. He loved fast food, Mountain Dew, and spicy Mexican chips. He was fascinated with learning. He loved video games and mastering his next move. We could hear him in the middle of the night playing his Xbox with people from around the world. He definitely made an online presence and had hundreds of followers. He was asked daily to join numerous gamer groups to be on their teams since he was clearly one of the best. He was a lover of rap music. In fact, he had made his own self-titled album named, "Kool Kelly." It had a unique perspective and captured Hunter's essence. He loved his three dogs, Shorty, Coco, and Lovey. We miss his oddly fantastic sense of humor and his insightful, loving, critical comments.

In 2006, myself, Hunter, and two of his three siblings (Tessa, Connor, and Grace) were struck by a driver going 45 MPH. We had just left a "Back to School Night" event. As we were leaving, we were struck by a car in the middle of the crosswalk by a teen driver. The driver was distracted and did not

notice a family of four crossing. We were all left with permanent disabilities and severe emotional trauma. Hunter was especially changed by the devastation of a reckless driver. It changed the course of our family's life forever.

A driver needs to be aware of school functions and activities which will be occurring before and after school hours. If you see a school having an activity, there will be people using the crosswalk. Pay attention, put down your phone... you could be





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PAY ATTENTION, PUT  
DOWN YOUR PHONE  
... YOU COULD BE  
THE NEXT VEHICLE OF  
DESTRUCTION TO A  
LOVING FAMILY.

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the next vehicle of destruction to a loving family. November 19, 2016, Hunter was struck by a car again while trying to cross the street by an intersection. This tragedy came upon our family and took the life of our baby boy.

We are not totally sure what happened that night. What we do know was he was approached by some law enforcement officers. They briefly spoke and he went on his way. Hunter's brain injury and the emotional trauma he suffered from the 2006 crash impacted the way he reacted to stressful situations. After his brief conversation with

the officers, he must have been scared. Hunter was halfway across the street when a young driver hit him, stealing the life that had just begun.

A driver's responsibility is to pay attention to your surroundings without allowing distractions to interfere. There will be pedestrians walking and crossing the streets no matter the time, place, or day. As our state becomes more populated, the number of pedestrians increase.

The first crash stole his innocence and the second crash stole his life.

The detectives who notified us of the car/pedestrian crash, had mixed up our family with another family. They told us Hunter had passed away. In actuality, he was still fighting for his life at the hospital. By the time the mistake had been figured out, it was too late. Hunter was gone. We were not able to say goodbye.

Hunter's light continues to shine and grow. I am striving to make his story known. Hunter is a part of all of our hearts. For those who had the grace of knowing him, know how special he was. His siblings are proud to live in his light and carry on the message that ALL LIVES MATTER.

Our hope with Hunter's memory is that his story will curb the destruction a vehicle can make when a driver is distracted. Pay attention. Save a life.

My awesomely beautiful son, I love you so much. I miss you with every breath I take. Peace be with you and I am proud to be your mom.

Love, Mom

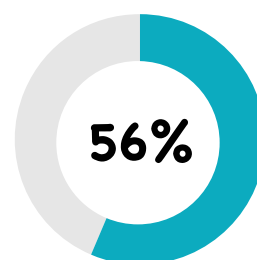
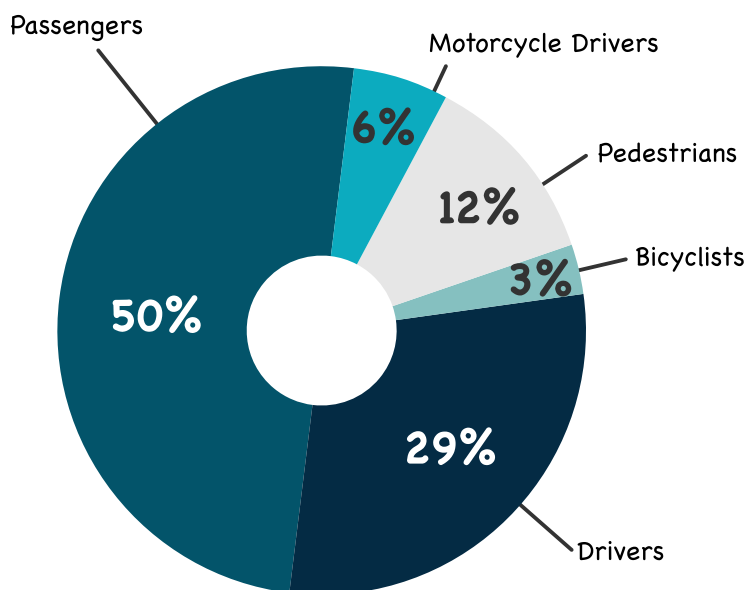


# 2016 TEEN CRASH STATISTICS

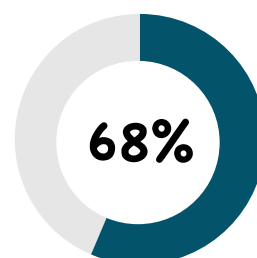
34 teens lost their lives on Utah roads.

A fatal crash is defined as a crash involving a motor vehicle traveling on a traffic way resulting in the death of at least one person within 30 days of the crash (Utah Department of Public Safety).

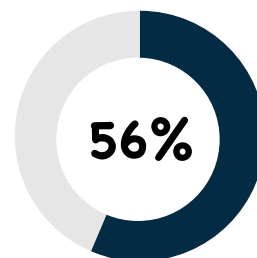
## OF THE 34 TEENS KILLED



Male



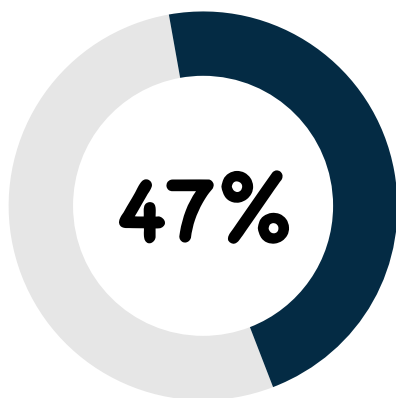
On a weekday



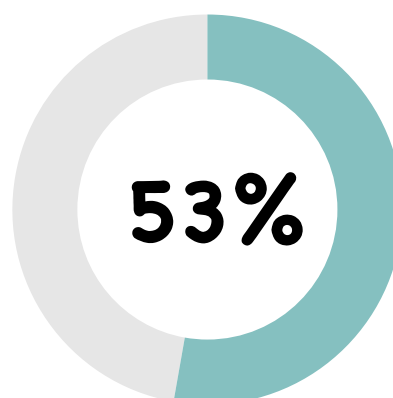
Single vehicle crash



# URBAN ROAD VS. RURAL ROADS\*

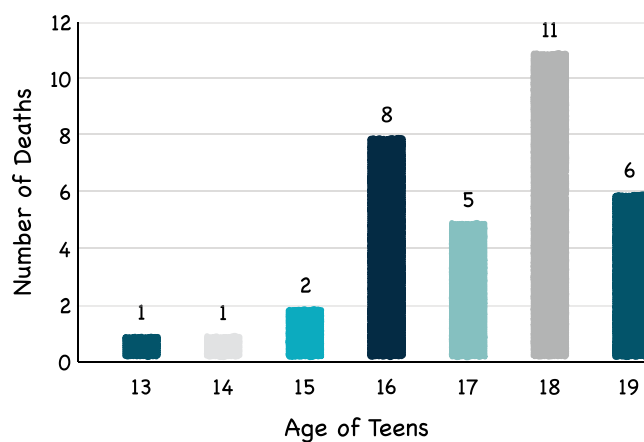
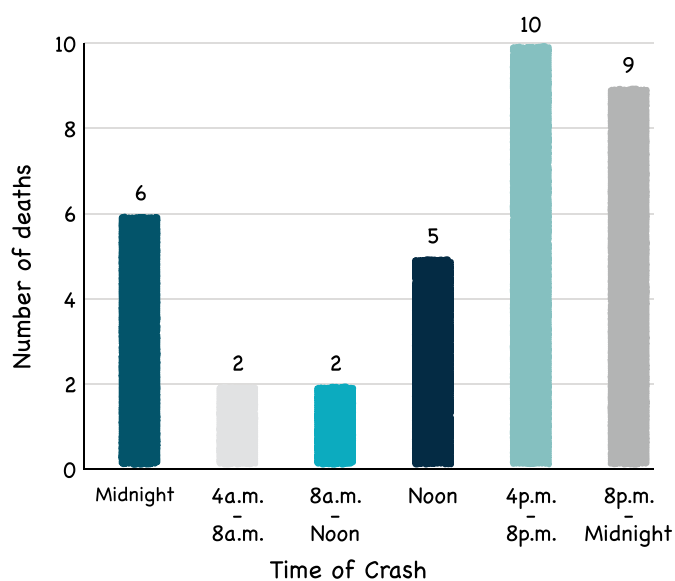


Rural



Urban

\*Statistics based on roadway

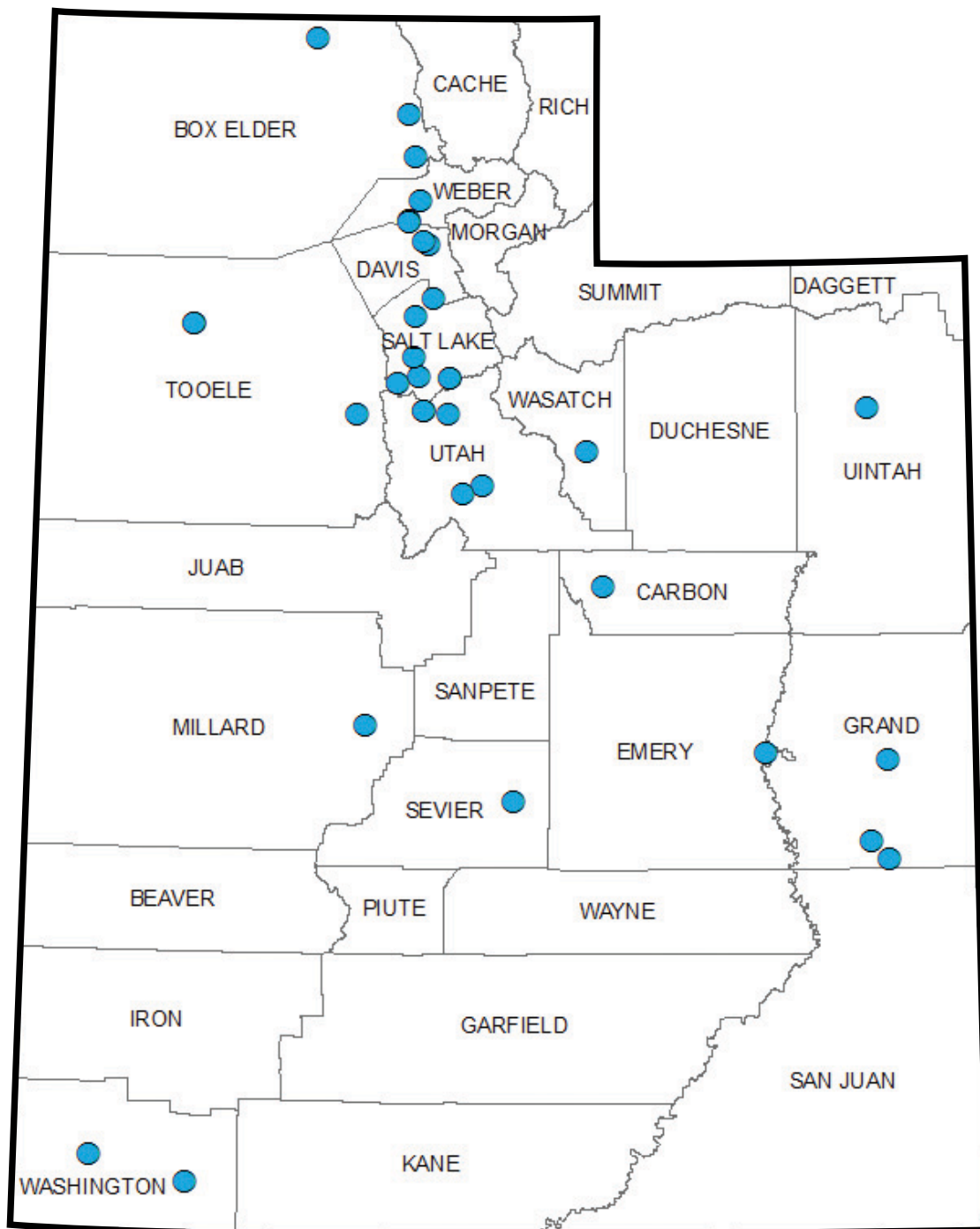


**DON'T DRIVE  
STUPID**

**ZERO Fatalities**



# - 2016 TEEN MOTOR VEHICLE FATALITIES -

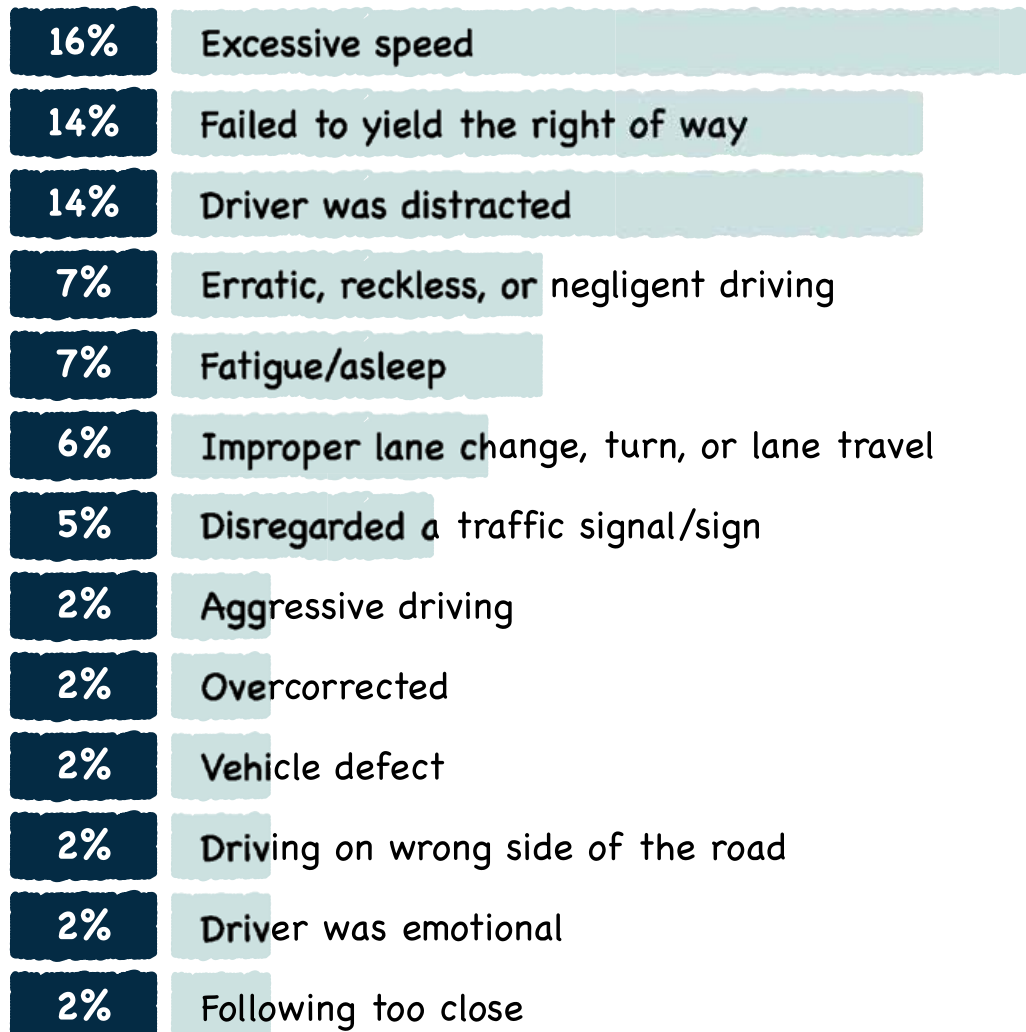




# TEEN DRIVER STATISTICS

In 2016, 44 teen drivers were involved in fatal crashes; a total of 47 people were killed in these crashes, including 10 of the 44 teen drivers. Excessive speed was the number one contributing factor in fatal crashes involving a teen driver in 2016. Crashes involving vehicles driven by teenagers traveling 50 MPH or higher were 5.5 times more likely to be fatal (Utah Highway Safety Office).

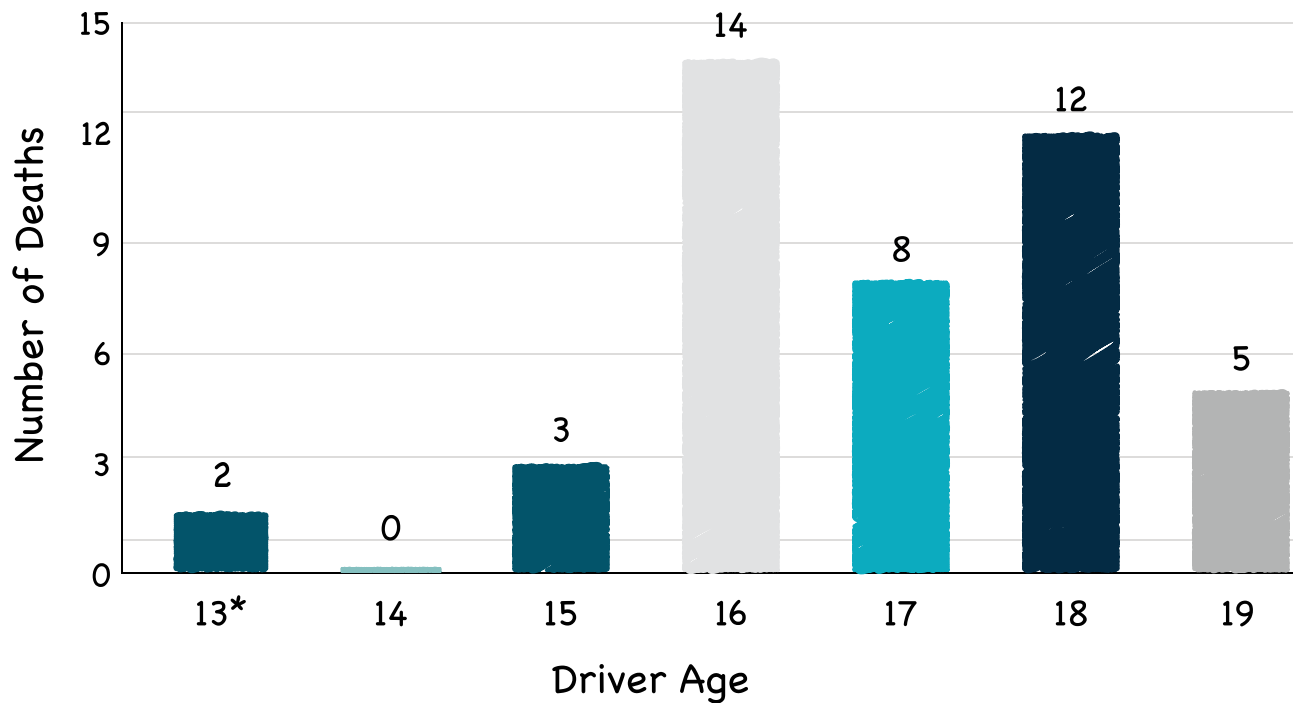
Contributing factors included:



*\*Each crash may have more than one contributing factor*



# AGE OF TEEN DRIVERS INVOLVED IN FATAL CRASHES



Since the Utah Graduated Driver Licensing (GDL) laws went into effect in 1999, there has been a 54% decrease in the rate of teens ages 15-17 killed in motor vehicle crashes (Utah Department of Health.)

The risk of motor vehicle crashes is higher among 16-to 19-year-olds than among any other age group. In fact, per mile driven, teen drivers aged 16-19 were nearly three times more likely than drivers aged 20 and older to be in a fatal crash. And among teens aged 16-17, the fatal crash rate per mile driven was nearly twice as high as it was for 18-to 19-year-olds (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, Highway Loss Data Institute).

*\*Both 13-year-old fatalities involved UTVs/dirt bikes on Utah roadways*



# HOW TO USE THIS BOOK TO SAVE LIVES

For the past 10 years, families have courageously shared their stories about how they lost their teen on a Utah road. Their hope in sharing these stories is that others never have to feel the pain of losing a loved one in a car crash. Please learn from these stories. Talk with your loved ones, friends, classmates, and students about these tragic stories and set rules for your car and whenever you ride in a car.

When reading these stories, please consider the following questions:

- What caused the crash?
- Could it have been prevented?
- What rules can you set while you are driving or riding in a car that can help avoid this type of crash?

Remember to be sensitive and to not place blame on any one person. Rather, focus on the principles that can be applied to encourage safe driving. Point out actions that are dangerous and should be avoided.

This book would not be possible without support from the following organizations:

Utah Department of Health

Utah Department of Transportation

Utah Department of Public Safety

Utah Teen Driving Task Force

To view Teen  
Memoriams  
from previous  
years, visit

[DontDriveStupid.com](http://DontDriveStupid.com)



2015



2014



2013



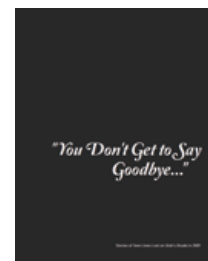
2012



2011



2010



2009



2008



2007

**DON'T DRIVE  
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**zero Fatalities** A Goal We Can All Live With

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